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**THE PORTRAYALS OF PEOPLE'S POWER IN THREE  
SELECTED POST-COLONIAL NOVELS OF CHINUA ACHEBE**

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## Abstrak

Chinua Achebe ialah seorang penulis dari Afrika yang hasil kerjanya banyak dikaji secara meluas. Kajian ini mengambil pendekatan mengkaji tiga novel Achebe dari perspektif pengikut berbanding dengan kajian lepas yang lazimnya melihat dari perspektif kepimpinan. Kajian tentang hasil kerja Achebe yang memberi tumpuan kepada pengikut masih belum diterokai. Oleh itu, kajian ini dijalankan dengan tiga objektif: a) untuk menerangkan cara Achebe menggambarkan pengikut dan kuasa mereka dalam novel *Arrow of God*, *A Man of the People* dan *Anthills of the Savannah* dari zaman pascakolonial dan untuk menerangkan sebab pengikut tersebut digambarkan sedemikian, b) untuk mengenal pasti tipologi pengikut dalam novel tersebut, dan c) untuk menunjukkan cara tindakan pengikut menyumbang kepada kegagalan kepimpinan dalam novel tersebut. Perspektif teori yang menjadi kerangka kajian ini ialah Teori Pascakolonial Homi Bhabha, iaitu *Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse* dan *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* oleh Paulo Freire. Data diperoleh menerusi analisis novel tersebut dengan menggunakan analisis sastera. Gaya bahasa sastera seperti metafora, perumpamaan dan personifikasi telah digunakan untuk menerangkan dapatan kajian. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan cara para pengikut tersebut menggunakan kuasa mereka adalah berlainan dalam ketiga-tiga novel. Pengikut dalam *A Man of the People* bertindak sebagai objek yang menggunakan kuasa mereka secara membuta tuli dengan menyokong ketua mereka. Tindakan ini membawa kepada kegagalan kepimpinan. Walau bagaimanapun dalam *Arrow of God*, para pengikut bertindak sebagai subjek yang menggunakan kuasa mereka dengan mencabar ketua mereka. Tindakan ini membawa kepada perubahan status quo. Kuasa mutlak yang telah diberikan oleh para pengikut tersebut kepada ketua mereka pada peringkat awal menyumbang kepada kegagalan kepimpinan. Dalam *Anthills of the Savannah*, wujud kedua-dua tipologi pengikut (objek dan subjek). Tindakan sesetengah pengikut yang sengaja membiarkan ketua mereka membuat tindakan yang salah menyumbang kepada kegagalan kepimpinan. Dapatan kajian yang diperoleh menunjukkan keperluan mengkaji novel Achebe dari perspektif pengikut. Kajian ini juga memperkaya bidang pengetahuan berkaitan kajian pengikut. Penggunaan teori Homi Bhabha yang lazimnya digunakan untuk kepimpinan dalam wacana pascakolonial didapati juga sesuai digunakan untuk kajian pengikut.

**Kata kunci:** Kuasa pengikut, Pascakolonial, Tipologi, Tindakan pengikut, Kegagalan kepimpinan

## Abstract

Chinua Achebe is a renowned African writer whose works have been widely studied. The present study approaches Achebe's three novels from followership perspective against the familiar leadership perspective in previous studies. Studies on Achebe's works which focus on followership remain unexplored. Therefore, this research was conducted with three objectives: a) to describe how Achebe portrays the followers and their powers in *Arrow of God*, *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah* from the post-colonial period and to explain why they were portrayed in such a manner, b) to identify the typologies of followership in these novels, and c) to show how the followers' actions contributed to leadership failure in these novels. The theoretical perspectives that framed the study were Homi Bhabha's Post-Colonial Theory that is, *Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse* and Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. The data were obtained by analysing the novels using literary analysis. Literary devices such as metaphor, simile and personification were applied to explain the findings. The findings show that the ways the followers exercised their powers are different in the three novels. The followers in *A Man of the People* behaved as objects who exercised their powers blindly in support of the leaders which led to the leader's failure. However, in *Arrow of God*, the followers behaved as subjects who exercised their powers to challenge the leader which led to a change of the status quo. The absolute powers accorded the leader initially contributed to his failure. In *Anthills of the Savannah*, the two typologies of followership (objects and subjects) are present. Some followers who condoned the wrong actions of the leader contributed to leadership failure. The findings have established the need to study Achebe's novels from followership perspective. The study has also enriched the body of knowledge on followership research. The application of Homi Bhabha's theory which is commonly used for leadership in post-colonial discourse has been found to be also suitable for followership studies.

**Keywords:** People's power, Post-colonial, Typologies, Followers' actions, Leadership failure

## **Dedication**

To the Glory of God, the Almighty,

To my parents, His Royal Highness, Oba Yusuf Afolabi Alabi, the late Ohoro of Shao, my father, and Olori Ibijope Agbeke Afolabi, my mother, for their faith in me and in the power of Education as a weapon of liberation

And

To my wife and children, for their sacrifice in the course of this journey



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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Research on followership started in the late nineties and are few in number. Baker (2007) for example, points out that research on followership began in 1955 and asserts that literature in the social sciences had discussed followership for several decades prior to this time. Baker acknowledges Kelly's (1988) contribution to followership study and points out that people should not assume that discussion in the field of followership started in 1988 with Kelly's *In Praise of followers*. He observes that Kelly's study is noteworthy because of its novel proposal that followers had an active role to play in organizational success and that success was not solely dependent on dynamic leaders alone.

Chalef (1995) shares the same position that followers have an active role to play in the success of an organization and posits that followers are more than passive subordinates. Baker (2007) acknowledges the works by Kelly (1998) and Chalef (1995) as primary works on which subsequent discussions on followership were based and that before long a small but growing body of work about followership developed into a field of its own (Baker, 2007). Works such as that of Riggio (2014) affirm that leadership could no longer be studied in isolation or with a small reference to followership. Baker stresses that followership has been less studied and he attributes this to leadership theory (Carlyle 1906) which posits that leaders actively led and the followers passively and obediently followed. The implication of Carlyle's theory is that one is either a leader or nothing more of importance since the theory attaches little importance to followers. Carlyle's (1906) Great Man theory of leadership posits that leaders are born and that natural abilities are inherited. Carlyle

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## APPENDIX A: LIST OF CHARACTERS

NOVELS			
Role	A Man of the people	Arrow of God	Anthills of the Savannah
Leaders	Prime Minister Chief Nanga Chief Koko Dr Makinde	Ezeulu (Chief Priest) Winterbottom Clark Wright	Sam
Followers	Odili Max Eunice Nwege Josiah Hunters Women dancers Edna Elzie Odili's father Edna's father Edna's mother Cook Village men and women	Nwaka Ezidimili Akuebue Ogbuefi Ofoka Udeozo Obika Nweke Ukpaka Oduche Nwodika's son Court Clerk Ngoye Fine country Nnachuckwu Umuaro elders Village men and women	Cabinet members Chris Ikem Mad Medico The old man Beatrice Elewa Agatha Traders Soldier Police man Tax drivers Elewa's uncle Emmanuel Students